

An Empirical Assessment on Occupational Stress among School Teachers

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Abstract:

Occupational stress refers to a situation where occupation related factors interact with employee to change, disrupts or enhance his psychological and physiological conditions such that the person is forced to deviate from normal functioning. The person cannot work efficiently due to stress. This situation becomes more problematic in case of teaching profession, because if a teacher is in stress, he/she will not be able to give full justification towards his/her teaching which in turn will disturb the academic performance of the students and the whole social and professional system will be disturb eventually. In the present paper, occupational stress has been evaluated for male and female married and unmarried high school teachers. Results found that that occupational stress index is the highest in case of married male teachers, while it is lowest in case of unmarried female teachers.

Keywords: Stress, Occupational Stress, Secondary School Teachers

I. INTRODUCTION

Occupational stress is a term used to define ongoing stress that is related to the workplace. The stress may have to do with the responsibilities associated with the work itself, or be caused by conditions that are based in the corporate culture or personality conflicts. As with other forms of tension, occupation stress can eventually affect both physical and emotional well being, if not managed effectively. According to Margolis and Kores (1974) "Occupational stress is a condition worth interacting with worker characteristics is to disrupted psychological and physiological homeostasis. The causal situation conditions are job stressors and the disrupted homeostasis is job related stress."

Modern world is marked as world of stress that has become a prevailing feature of human life. The ever increasing needs and aspirations, tough competition, pressure of meeting deadlines, uncertainty of future and weakened social support have made life very much demanding and highly stressful. Occupational stress usually results from conflicting incompatible or unclear expectation that is derived from work environment.

Occupational stress can affect your health when the stressors of the workplace exceed the employee's ability to have some control over their situation or to cope in other ways. For example:

- Workers are overburdened with workloads that remain high regardless of their efforts: the workload is the STRESSOR
- Employees feel anxious and their heart rate speeds up because they cannot control their workloads: that is STRESS
- Increased blood pressure, insomnia, or chronic headaches: that is STRAIN

Now a days, everyone seems to be talking about stress. You hear it not only in daily conversation but also through Television, Radio, the newspaper's and the ever increasing

number of conferences, stress centres and university courses are devoted to the topic.

Man is ventured to study the stress in great detail since he is aware that his survival may depend on his ability to deal with it or get out of its way. On the other hand stress can cause fatal illness. Stress has also consigned rather large number of people to mental institutions, psychiatrists couch, prisons and hospitals.

According to Seyle (1950) "*Stress has been defined as the state manifested by the specific syndrome which consists of all the non-specific induced changes with in a biological system*"

Occupational Stress and Teacher

Occupational stress has become increasingly common in teaching profession largely because of increased occupational complexities and increased economic pressure on individuals. A major source of distress among teachers is result of failure of school to meet the social needs and jobs demands of the teachers.

Teaching profession occupies important and prestigious place in society. Teachers are considered as the creators of leaders, scientists, philosophers, advocates, politicians and administrators. Teacher is the principle means for implementing all educational programmes of the organizations of educations. The teacher must be aware of his clear role to build up the nation. Teachers are over burdened with regular teaching load. Occupational satisfaction is a necessary condition for a healthy growth of teacher's personality. A teacher at present has a vulnerable position. College teachers protest that they are not paid enough. The importance of pay or a factor in occupational has been greatly over emphasized.

In general, occupational stress arises from the working conditions/environment of a system, when we talk of stress among teachers. Many factors cause stress among teachers.

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School teachers face high amounts of stress during teaching and handling students; Classroom in developing countries remain overcrowded and teacher face intensive verbal communications, prolonged standing, high volume of work load.

Teachers are also over burdened with regular teaching work and non-teaching work as election duties, duty in census; populations counting etc. the teachers are often heard of complaining about. With the changing socio-economic scenario and increasing unemployment, the values of teacher and their professional concerns associated with the job have undergone a change, increasing stresses and hassles of teachers.

Causes of Stress in Teaching Profession

General Factors

Working with national curriculum, teacher appraisal, lack of authority and sanctions for disciplining students, threats of school closure, media portrayal of teachers and inability to reconcile different roles i.e. of teacher, guide, counselor and social worker, conflict at home and work, attack on pride by rude pupils, financial pressures, and declining status in the community.

The Role of Management

Feeling of being used or manipulated, being seen as willing workhouse, lack of flexibility in times of need, too much emphasis on paper work, lack of support from management, sexual discrimination and not knowing if you are doing a good job, lack of good pay and promotional aspect etc.

School Policy and Ethos

Lack of consultation, fear of speaking one's mind, no clear boundaries of responsibility, adopting to change, fear of abuse from parent, break, lunch and afterschool duties, covering for absent colleagues, fear of losing your job etc.

Working Conditions

Large Classes, crowded staff areas, poorly lit rooms, lack of resources, working on school matter during vocations, rewards don't match efforts.

The Pupils

Lack of co-operation from pupils, racial problems, pupils using bad language, pupil answering back, verbal abuse from pupils towards staff and attitude of pupils towards authority, attack on pride by discourteous students.

From the outside teaching seems all together a different job with summer vacations, winter vacations and spring breaks. But considering everything that a teacher has to go through everyday all these days off do not do much to get a teacher back in the right frame of mind. A sensible teacher must know where to draw a line to prevent his social and personal life from being absorbed by his professional life. Though it is very difficult to leave the stresses of the school in the office and not let it affect their personal life, but there are methods which can help a teacher to reduce these effects.

II. LITERATURE SURVEY

Nowadays when India is progressing by leaps and bounds and is on the verge of becoming a developed nation, we

cannot afford to neglect talents of our teachers because the teacher is one of the pillars of the society and the country. Without good teachers, no country can progress. The importance of teachers in the life of a nation cannot be overlooked. The teacher influences the immature minds of the youth. He treats and moulds the young mind into various forms. The poor teacher does not enjoy much prestige in the society of today. There is a great need to work upon this aspect so that suitable action may be taken to overcome the stress level among faculty members.

According to Schwab and Iwanicki (1982), occupational stress in teachers can lead to a variety of negative outcomes including emotional exhaustion, feelings of depersonalization, and a sense of failure with one's personal accomplishment—a condition the authors refer to as "burnout." Burnout is one of the major reasons that teachers leave the teaching profession, a loss that results in added costs in training and hiring for the field of education (Niles & Anderson, 1993). In other words, the negative outcomes of teachers' occupational stress can be both internal and external.

Because of the negative outcomes associated with occupational stress, many studies have attempted to better understand the phenomenon of occupational stress as it relates to education. These studies have found that degree of stress can differ as a function of several variables. For example, Mo (1991), in a study examining for relationships among secondary school teachers' levels of occupational stress, personality type, and social support, found that burnout was greater among teachers new to the profession, teachers with more personal (non-job related) stress in their lives, teachers who lacked strong social support systems, and teachers with Type A personalities.

Similarly, in his study of occupational stress and teaching, Borg (1991) identified four factors that contributed to teachers' level of occupational stress. Most people never realize the amount of stress that teachers deal with on a daily basis. They think, "Wow, my kids can be holy terrors. It's a good thing I can drop them off at school and get a break." What they never stop to consider is the poor teacher at the other end of that ride to school who has to deal with everyone else's holy terrors.

Stress at work resulting from increasing complexities of work and its divergent demand has become a prominent and pervading feature of the modern organizations. Stress as opined by Robinson (2007), is a pressure of adverse influences, circumstances (such as stress of teaching) that disturbs the natural physiological balance of the body. Malow-Iroff and Johnson (2006) are of the view that stress is the individual's response to the events (such as response to our biological temperament, interaction with others and the environmental conditions in which one is placed, etc. and the events themselves are stressors. Life events and the stress they place on the individual are not the problem until the individual fails to handle the situation competently and engages in poor coping skills. Occupational stress may be the result of the individual characteristics of the person or related to his/her environment (Sharma, Sood and Spielberg, 1998; Ahmad, Raheem and Jamal, 2003; Hansen and Sullivan, 2003; Bachkirova, 2005; Tytherileigh, Webb, Cooper and

Ricketts, 2005; Betoret, 2006; Grebennikov and Wiggins, 2006; Jepson and Forrest, 2006; Lazuras, 2006 and Zhang, 2007).

Although the teaching profession has traditionally been regarded as low stress occupation (French et al., 1982) but during the past two decades the situation is somersaulted (Olivier & Venter, 2003) Teaching is becoming more challenging as a profession: a more paper work, more bureaucracy and more unruly classes. Worldwide surveys reveal widespread concern about the effects of stress on teachers' sense of well-being and their willingness to stay in the profession. Compared to the general population, teachers are at risk for higher levels of psychological distress and lower levels of job satisfaction (Schonfield, 1990). Borg (1990) reported that up to one third of the teachers perceive their occupation as highly stressful. It is clear that teachers can be exposed to a number of sources of stress.

Kyriacou (2001) also reported that the main sources of teacher stress are teaching students who lack motivation, maintaining discipline in the classroom, confronting general time pressures and workload demands, being exposed to a large amount of change, being evaluated by others, having challenging relationships with colleagues, administration, and management, and being exposed to generally poor working conditions prospects, unsatisfactory working conditions, ambiguity of the teacher's role, poor relationships with colleagues, pupils, and administrators, and job insecurity.

There is a pervasive perception among teachers surveyed who have reported their jobs as highly or extremely stressful (Kyriacou and Sutcliffe, 1978; Boriles, 1982; Borg and Falzon, 1989; Soloman and Feld, 1989; O Connor and Guglielmi & Tatrow, 1998; Pithers and Soden, 1998). Furthermore there is research evidence that indicates that work related stress among teachers has serious implications for their work performance, health and psychological status (Capel, 1987; Cooper, 1986; Pierce and Molly, 1990). Health and psychological outcomes can in turn lead to poorer teaching performance, poor jobsatisfaction, increased absenteeism, poor decision making and bad judgement (Eckles, 1987; Quick and Quick, 1984). The pupils of stressed teachers have less effective professional and personal attention with attendant negative educational consequences.

There is a significant difference between the male and female teachers of professional colleges with respect to their occupational stress levels. This is due to many factors such as college environment, peer group pressure, lack of audit of work, teacher's qualifications, socio economic status, home environment. The result of the present study is helpful in guiding the teachers, administrators and counselors who may provide maximum facilities and good environment in professional colleges for their teacher.

III. EXPERIMENTATION

The Method of the Study

The main objective behind the present work is to sort out the occupational stress among teachers at secondary school

level. On the basis of above study, the investigator found out occupational stress in male and female and married and unmarried teachers working at secondary schools. The investigator visited four school of Ghaziabad District and then administered the Occupational Stress Index (O.S.I.) inventory to sort occupational stress.

Statistical Technique:

t-test is used to test the hypothesis.

Population

Population for the purpose of this study has been defined as all the male and female teachers (married and unmarried) who are working in secondary schools.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

In the present study, it includes two groups of secondary school teachers based on their gender (male and female). Further, these groups are divided into married and unmarried categories. Each group has 20 subjects for a total of 80 teachers. This sample is selected randomly.

Tool Used for the Research

Present study used Occupational Stress Index (OSI) tool, developed by A. K. Srivastava and A. K. Singh which is used to measure extent of stress which employees perceive arising from various constituents and conditions of their job.

Statement of the Problem

A Comparative study of Occupational Stress among Male and Female Teachers of Secondary Schools in relation to their Marital Status

Objectives of the Study

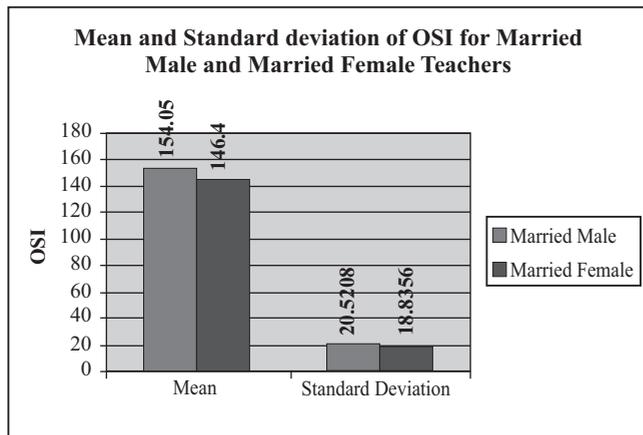
- To assess the occupational stress level among male and female secondary school level teachers who are married.
- To assess the occupational stress level among male and female secondary school level teachers who are not married.

Hypotheses

- There is no significant difference in occupational stress level of married male and married female secondary school teachers on occupational stress level.
- There is no significant difference in occupational stress level of unmarried male and unmarried female secondary school teachers on occupational stress level.

Objective 1: To assess the occupational stress level among male and female secondary school level teachers who are married.

Description: For evaluating the occupational stress among married male and married female secondary school level teachers, we used Occupational Stress Index by A K Srivastava and A. K. Singh. This tool was administered on total 20 married male teachers and 20 married female teachers of secondary schools in Ghaziabad district. The graph shows the data for occupational stress among married male and married female teachers.



Hypothesis 1

- There is no significant difference in occupational stress level of married male and married female secondary school teachers on occupational stress level.

We estimated the mean, standard deviation, t-value for the obtained data, which is shown in the Table 4.1 given below:

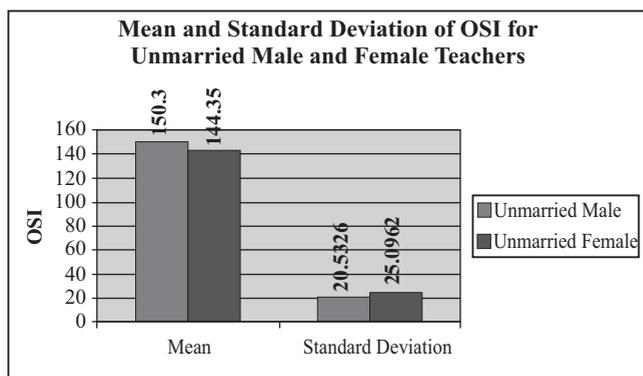
Table 4.1 Mean, Standard Deviation and t-value for Married Male Teachers and Married Female Teachers

Variable	n	Mean	SD	t-value	Level of Significance	Table value
Mean Value of Occupational Stress for Married Male Teachers	20	154.05	20.58	0.22	0.01	2.86
Mean Value of Occupational Stress for Married Female Teachers	20	146.4	18.80		0.05	2.09

From the Table 4.1, it is clear that obtained t-value is less than the Table value for t-test, which signifies the acceptance of the hypothesis. Therefore, we can say that there is no significant difference in occupational stress level of married male and married female secondary school teachers on occupational stress level.

4.2.2 Objective 2: To assess the occupational stress level among male and female secondary school level teachers who are unmarried.

Description: For evaluating the occupational stress among unmarried male and unmarried female secondary school level teachers, the same tool was administered on total 20 unmarried male teachers and 20 unmarried female teachers of secondary schools in Ghaziabad district. The graph shows the data for occupational stress among unmarried male and unmarried female teachers.



Hypothesis 2

- There is no significant difference in occupational stress level of unmarried male and unmarried female secondary school teachers on occupational stress level.

Table 4.2 Mean, Standard Deviation and t-value for Unmarried Male Teachers and Unmarried Female Teachers

Variable	n	Mean	SD	t-value	Level of Significance	Table value
Mean Value of Occupational Stress for Unmarried Male Teachers	20	150.3	20.53	0.427	0.01	2.86
Mean Value of Occupational Stress for Unmarried Female Teachers	20	144.3	25.09		0.05	2.09

From the Table 4.2, it is clear that obtained t-value is less than the Table value for t-test, which signifies the acceptance of the hypothesis. Therefore, we can say that there is no significant difference in occupational stress level of unmarried male and unmarried female secondary school teachers on occupational stress level.

From the above study, it is clear that occupational stress index is the highest in case of married male teachers, while it is lowest in case of unmarried female teachers.

IV. MAJOR FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

The major findings of the present study are summarized as follows:

First objective was to study the occupational stress level of male and female secondary school teachers, who are married. Results show that occupational stress level is high in case of male teacher who are married in comparison to their counterparts, however this difference is not significant. The reason for having higher stress in married male teachers may be because of the reason that they are the only bread earner for the family. They may have the higher stress of loosing job and therefore they take more work pressure, which may not be case of female married teachers.

Second objective was to study the occupational stress level of male and female secondary school teachers, who are not married. Result shows that though mean value of stress level is slightly higher in case of unmarried male teachers than unmarried female teachers, however the difference is very less and is not significant at all, which concludes that both have low stress may be due to the dependency on their parents and family.

V. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Since improvement and innovation in research have no barriers and no study can be said to be an end point in itself. The present study opens many issues and suggestions in this direction. It can be summarized as below:-

- Many cross-sectional comparisons, like rural/urban, private school/Govt. schools, different age groups etc. may be carried out.
- The present study was conducted on secondary level. Study can be conducted at others levels of education for example – primary and college level.

- The study can also be performed on any working person in industry or Government organization.
- To measure the depression only Occupational Stress Index developed by A. K. Srivastava and A. K. Singh measuring scale is used. Other measuring scale for Occupational Stress may also be used to measure the stress.

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